



Attorney Docket No. DDR-5455-Div (1417Y P 649)

PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In Re U.S. Patent Application of)

BILSTAD, Arnold C., BUCHANAN, Bradley H.,)

MARTTILA, Alan W. and WOODWORTH, Archie))

Application No. 09/970,580)

Confirmation No. 2598)

Filing Date: October 4, 2001)

For: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR)

MANIPULATING PRE-STERILIZED)

COMPONENTS IN AN ACTIVE STERILE)

FIELD)

Group Art Unit: 1744

Examiner: Krisanne Marie Jastrzab

AMENDMENT AND REPLY TO DECEMBER 7, 2004 **OFFICE ACTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH 37 C.F.R. 1.114**

MAIL STOP RCE

Commissioner for Patents

P.O. Box 1450

ALEXANDRIA, VA 22313-1450

DEAR SIR:

This is in response to the Final Office Action mailed December 7, 2004. A shortened statutory period of three months has been set for response, making this Reply due on March 7, 2005. Therefore, this Reply along with the accompanying Request for Continued Examination (RCE) Transmittal are considered timely. Reconsideration of the referenced application, including all pending claims, is respectfully requested in light of the amendments and the remarks set forth below.

Amendments are to the pending claims and begin on page 2 of this paper.

Remarks are provided beginning on page 4 of this paper.